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AVIATION AND SPECIAL DUTY PHOTOREFRACTIVE KERATECTOMY (PRK) WAIVER AND SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

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AVIATION AND SPECIAL DUTY PHOTOREFRACTIVE KERATECTOMY (PRK) WAIVER AND SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM



This presentation is based on AF/SG policies and memorandums in effect as of 03 Nov 03. Any program revision subsequent to 03 Nov 03 are not reflected in this

document

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Aviation and Special Duty PRK Topics

AF CRS Policies / Memorandums Review

Current Aviation & Special Duty PRK policy

Program Requirements

Program Responsibilities

Program Resources

USAF Aviation & Special Duty PRK Registry



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Corneal Refractive Surgery (CRS) Policies &

• **SG Memorandum 19 APR 1996**

- Restates 1994 Physical Standards disqualifying new accessions
 - PRK not authorized for rated/non-rated personnel
- Requested Accession/Retention Review
- Requested Non-Aviation Research Study

• **SG Memorandum 12 JUL 1999**

- PRK Accession Medical Waivers
 - Allowed AF Appointment, Enlistment, Commissioning
 - Applied to AD/ARC Having Undergone PRK
 - Waiver Policy for Select Non-rated Personnel
 - Radial Keratotomy/LASIK Not Considered
- MEB Required Regardless of Treatment Result



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Corneal Refractive Surgery (CRS) Policies &

Memorandums

- **SG Policy 11 APR 2000 (#00-003)**
 - Active Duty /ARC PRK/LASIK Applicants
 - Allowed AF Appointment, Enlistment, Commissioning
 - Waiver Policy for Select Non-rated Personnel
 - Radial Keratotomy/LASIK/Non-PRK Not Considered
 - MEB Not Required, If AFI 48-123 Vision Standards Met
- **SG Policy 02 AUG 2000 (#00-005)**
 - Established USAF Aviation/Special Duty Policy
 - Active And Reserve Component Identified Aviation and Special Duty Programs Personnel and Applicants
 - Rated Officers (Pilots, Navigators, etc), Non-Rated Aircrew
 - ONLY PRK authorized
 - Optional Treatment / Not A Mission/Duty Requirement



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Corneal Refractive Surgery (CRS) Policies &

• **SG Memorandum 26 APR 2001**

- Exception to SG Policy #00-005
 - Ground-based Space and Missile Operation Duty
 - PRK Through DoD Warfighter Centers
 - PRK or LASIK at Own Expense Through Civilian Source
 - Must Obtain Commander Permission
 - Comply With Current Policy Provisions
- LASIK Disqualified From Future Flying Duties

• **SG Policy 11 DEC 2001 (#01-004)**

- USAF **Warfighter** Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK) Program
 - Establish policy for AF personnel other than Aviation and Special Duty



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Corneal Refractive Surgery (CRS) Policies &

• SG Memorandum 01 JUL 2002

- Clarification of Aviation/Special Duty AFSC/DUTY Inclusion Criteria
- Warfighter "Priority One"

• SG Memorandum 20 DEC 2002

- Revised Refractive limits

• SG Memorandum 04 APR 2003

- One-Year AD Retainability After Treatment
- Not Deployable While on Steroid Drops

• SG Policy 20 AUG 2003 (#03-002)

- Implementation of LASIK for AF personnel
 - Other than Aviation and Special Duty
- Authorize Permissive TDY (PTDY)



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The USAF Aviation And Special Duty PRK Registry

- **The AF Aviation PRK Registry Established**

- Manager: Aeromedical Consultation Service, USAFSAM, Brooks City-Base
 - Maintain Database of PRK Treated Aviation and Special Duty Personnel
 - For Pilots, Apportionment By Rated Years Of Service (RYOS) IAW Policy
 - Collect And Analyze Aviation And Special Duty PRK Related Data
 - Identify And Measure Occurrence Of Relevant Adverse Outcomes In The Population
 - Identify Any And All Adverse Effects Of PRK,
 - Determine The Causes And Take Action To Prevent Or Minimize PRK-related Adverse Outcomes In The Aviation And Special Duty Environment
 - Assess The Success Of PRK In The Aviation And Special Duty Environment



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The USAF Aviation And Special Duty PRK Registry

- **Number Of PRK Waivers For Pilots Per Year Restricted**
 - Trained Pilots Treated Per Year Limited To 200,
 - Apportioned By Rated Years Of Service (RYOS)
 - Must Have 1 Year Of Retainability After PRK
 - Student Pilots Selected Per Year Limited To 100
 - Each Pilot Accession Source, Including Guard And Reserve, Limited To 10% Of Their Selectees With PRK Waivers Per Year
- **No Number Restriction For All Other Aviation And Special Duty Personnel**

I n t e g r i t y - S e r v i c e - E x c e l l e n c e



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Apportionment Of Pilot PRK Slots By Rated Years Of RATED YEARS OF SERVICE Service PRK SLOTS (MAX PER YEAR)

5 OR LESS	45
6-10	55
11-15	50
16-20	35
21-25	10
26 OR MORE	5



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Current Aviation/Special Duty Waiver Criteria

- **Squadron Commander Permission Required**
- **All Applicants Must Obtain “Permission To Proceed” Before Treatment**
 - “Permission to Proceed” Authorization Granted by AF Aviation PRK Registry
 - AD Pilots And AD Boom Operators Treated at Wilford Hall Medical Center (WHMC)
 - AD Non-Pilot Aviation and Special Duty Personnel May Obtain PRK At Any Operational DoD *Refractive Surgery for the Warfighter* Center
 - Contact Treatment Facility for Details, Site Specific Restrictions May Apply
 - ARC Aviation/Special Duty Not Eligible for Treatment at MTF Obtain at Own Expense
- **TDY Must Be Unit-Funded (Not MTF-Funded)**



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Applicant for Aviation/Special Duty Waiver Criteria

- **Non-Pilot Applicants**

- PRK Must Be Done 12 Months Before Applying

- **Undergraduate Pilot Training Applicants**

- PRK Must Be Done Before Program Application
- May Apply For Flying Class I PRK Waiver As Soon As 3 Months Post-PRK
 - *Works Out To About 4 Months*
- Post-Op Refractive Stability Exams At Least 3 Months Apart
 - *Waiver Documentation Will Accompany Initial Flying Exam*
- May Not Start Initial Flying Until 12 Months Post-Op



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Applicant for Aviation/Special Duty Waiver Criteria

- **Clinical Pre-PRK Treatment** (Cycloplegic Refraction to Best Visual Acuity)
 - Myopia: -1.00 to -5.50 Diopters, any Meridian (Pilots)
-1.00 to -8.00 Diopters, any Meridian (Non-Pilots)
 - Astigmatism: 0.75 to 3.00 Diopters
 - Anisometropia: No greater than 3.50 diopters
 - No Hyperopia AND astigmatism
 - Demonstrated Refractive Stability (≤ 0.50 diopters past 6 months)
 - Other Ocular History Disqualification
 - Applicable Accession/Flying/Special Duty Training Standards
- **Clinical Post-PRK Treatment**
 - No Subjective Complaints
 - Pertaining To Glare, Haze, Halos, Diplopia, Or Night Vision Difficulty
 - Demonstrated Refractive Stability (≤ 0.50 diopters past 6 months)
 - Refractive Sphere or Cylinder Shift in 2 Post-op Cycloplegic Refractions



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Applicant for Aviation/Special Duty Waiver Criteria

- **Waiver Process**

- HQ AETC / SGPS: PRK Waiver And Certification Authority
- MAJCOM: PRK Waiver Authority For Renewals
 - PRK Waiver Validity Not To Exceed 1 Year
 - PRK Waiver Will Not Be Indefinite
- Application Package
 - Must Include Documentation That All Clinical Criteria Are Met
 - Must Be Forwarded To AETC Along With The Initial Flying Physical
 - Copy Must Be Sent To The *USAF PRK Registry* At The ACS



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Applicant for Aviation/Special Duty Waiver Criteria

- **Waiver Process**

- If Waivered and Selected for UPT
 - Initial ACS PRK Evaluation in Conjunction With Medical Flight Screening (MFS) Prior to Reporting to UPT Base - (12-month Exam)
 - Must Have PRK Waiver Before Beginning the Flying Portion of UPT
 - Upon Completion of UPT and Before Reporting to Formal Training Unit, Student Pilot Must Have Repeat ACS PRK Evaluation
- Evaluation (Pilot And Boom Operator Applicants)
 - Must Undergo Initial ACS Evaluation 12 Months Post-PRK And Prior To Reporting For Aviation Or Special Duty Training
- Database Registry (All)
 - All Follow-up Evaluation Data On Members Accepted Into The Aviation Program Forwarded To The *USAF PRK Registry* At The Aeromedical Consultation Service (ACS)



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Current Aviation/Special Duty Waiver Criteria

- **Qualifying for Aviation/Special Duty PRK Program**
 - Rated Officers
 - Pilots, Navigators, Flight Surgeons, Observers, Air Battle Managers
 - Except Aviation Service Code 7J or otherwise Disqualified IAS AFI 11-402
 - Non-Rated Crewmembers
 - Current Duty Include Flying or Special Operational Duty
 - In-Flight Refuelers (Primary AFSC 1A0X)
- **Treated as Warfighter “Category One”**



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Current Aviation/Special Duty Waiver Criteria

- **NOT Qualifying for Aviation/Special Duty PRK Program**
 - Current Air Traffic Controllers
 - Air Vehicle Operators
 - Space and Missile Operation Crew
 - Operational Support Flyers
 - Former Aviators
 - Aviation Service Code 7J
 - Disqualified
 - Cross-trained,
 - No longer carry active Aviation Service Code or Aviation/Special Duty AFSC
- **Treated under “Warfighter Program” Category 2, 3, or 4**



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Current Aviation/Special Duty (AD and ARC)

- **Clinical Pre-PRK Treatment** (Cycloplegic Refraction to Best Visual Acuity)
 - Age 21 Or Older
 - Myopia -1.00 to -5.50 Diopters, any Meridian (Pilots)
 -1.00 to -8.00 Diopters, any Meridian (Non-Pilots)
 - Astigmatism 0.75 to 3.00 Diopters
 - Anisometropia No greater than 3.50 diopters
 - No Hyperopia in Any Meridian
 - Demonstrated Refractive Stability
 - ∇ ≤0.50 diopters in Sphere and/or Cylinder over past 12 months
 - Other Ocular History Disqualification



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Current Aviation/Special Duty (AD and ARC)

- **Clinical Pre-PRK Treatment** (Cycloplegic Refraction to Best Visual Acuity)
 - Contact Lens Wearers:
Must Remove Contact Lenses Prior To Treatment And All Baseline Referral Exams
 - SCL for at Least 30 Days
 - HCL/RGP for at Least 90 Days
 - **No History Of Certain Ocular Diseases** To Include:
 - Evidence Of Keratoconus,
 - Corneal Irregularity
 - Abnormal Corneal Topography In Either Eye
 - Other Listed In Policy Letter And On PRK Application Form
 - Corneal Topography
 - Accomplished Locally
 - Original Or Color Copy Included In The Referral Package



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Current Aviation/Special Duty (AD and ARC)

- **PRK Referral And Treatment Process**

- Squadron Commander Permission
 - Endorse Application Form
- Flight Surgeon & Military Optometrist Or Ophthalmologist Local Screening
 - Finalize Application Form
 - Review-Verify Demographics
 - Clinical Examination / Verify Member Meets Clinical Criteria
 - Obtain Corneal Topography
 - Include Original Or Color Copy In Referral Package
- Completed Referral Package Send To:

USAFSAM / FECO
2507 KENNEDY CIRCLE
BROOKS CITY-BASE TX 78235-5117
ATTN: THE USAF PRK REGISTRY



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Current Aviation/Special Duty (AD and ARC)

- **PRK Referral And Treatment Process**

- Referral Package Received by Aeromedical Consultation Service (ACS)
 - "Permission To Proceed" Determination
 - For Pilots, Apportionment By Rated Years Of Service (RYOS) Accomplished
- ACS Approval / Denial Action Returned To Local FSO
 - FSO Notifies Applicant Of Action
 - FSO Notifies Local Eyecare Professional Of Application Results And Coordinates F/U Schedule For Those Given "Permission To Proceed"
 - FSO Manages And Maintains Tracking Procedures For PRK, DNIF Actions, And Compliance With Planned Follow-ups
- Member Schedules Appointment For PRK (Unit Funded TDY)
 - AD Pilots And AD Boom Operators Treated At WHMC
 - AD Non-Pilots/Boom Operators At Any DoD "Warfighter" Center
 - All ARC At Civilian Center At Own Expense



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Current Aviation/Special Duty (AD and ARC)

- **PRK Referral And Treatment Process**

- Treatment TDY To San Antonio, TX (AD Pilots And Boom Operators Only)
 - Brooks City-Base, TX (ACS)
 - Baseline Evaluation
 - Lackland AFB, TX (WHMC)
 - Final Pre-Operative Evaluation
 - PRK Treatment
- Anticipate 2-week TDY



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Current Aviation/Special Duty (AD and ARC)

• **PRK Referral And Treatment Process**

- Follow-up Exams Are Mandatory At 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12, 24 Months
 - Future Follow-up Intervals Yet To Be Determined
 - 1, 2, 3, 4, 6-month Mandatory Follow-ups
 - Accomplished At Member's Base Of Assignment, But Only....
 - » If Local Military Eye Care Professional Is Available and Has Completed The Approved *Refractive Surgery For The Warfighter* Training Course
 - » Local Flight Surgeon Should Confirm Accomplishment Of This Training
- Aviation-Specific Vision Testing at Brooks City-Base (ACS)
 - AD Pilots And AD Boom Operators ONLY
 - Pretreatment Baseline, 12-month, 24-month, Undetermined Future Follow-ups
- All Aviation / Special Duty Program Follow-up Evaluation Data
 - Must Be Forwarded To The *USAF PRK Registry* At The ACS
 - Consult Latest Policy Guidelines For Current Requirements



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Current Aviation/Special Duty (AD and ARC)

• **Waiver Process**

- Clinical Eligibility For Waiver After PRK (Local Duty)
 - Individual Must Meet The Applicable USAF Vision Standards On 2 Different Examinations Separated By At Least 2 Weeks
 - Applicable NVG Vision Standards Must Be Met
 - No Subjective Complaints: Glare, Haze, Halos, Diplopia, Night Vision Difficulty
 - May Be Waivered For Aviation/Special Duty While Using Steroid Eye Medication
- Clinical Eligibility For Waiver After PRK (Worldwide Duty)
 - MAJCOM Is The PRK Waiver Certification Authority
 - Waiver Validity Will Not Exceed One Year
 - PRK Waivers Will Not Be Indefinite
 - The Aeromedical Summary With Required Documentation Must Be Forwarded To The *USAF PRK Registry* At The ACS Or Posted In AIMWTS
 - Must Complete Required Follow-up Evaluations



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Pilot Operational Restrictions Following PRK Waiver

- **FIRST DAY AND NIGHT SORTIE* WITH INSTRUCTOR PILOT**
- **FIRST NIGHT REFUELING* WITH INSTRUCTOR PILOT**
- **FIRST NIGHT FORMATION FLIGHT* WITH INSTRUCTOR PILOT**
- **FIRST NVG FLIGHT* WITH INSTRUCTOR PILOT**
- Documentation Of Satisfactory Performance For All Of Above To Be Provided By Squadron Commander To The Local Designated Aeromedical Waiver Authority For Inclusion In Member's Medical Records And *The AF PRK Registry*

*THESE EVENTS MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE SAME SORTIE IF PRACTICAL



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Aviation/Special Duty Responsibilities

- **Pilot Accession Sources:**

- Ensure No More Than 10% Of Their UPT Selectees Have PRK Waivers
- Future AF members are aware of AF Aviation PRK Program requirements



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Aviation/Special Duty Responsibilities

- **Member:**

- Obtain Squadron Commander's Permission
- Comply With All Required Referral And Follow-up Evaluations
- Comply With All Operational Restrictions Following PRK
- Acknowledge That Failure To Comply Will Result In Automatic "Grounding"
- Read The Booklet
"Facts You Need To Know About Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK) Surgery"
 - Written By The Appropriate PRK Laser Manufacturer
 - Required By The FDA Before PRK And Will Be Provided
- ARC Members Confirm Civilian Ophthalmologist Is FDA Certified For PRK



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Aviation/Special Duty Responsibilities

- **Squadron Commander:**

- Grant Permission for PRK
- Certify That Member Meets Aviation PRK Program Requirements
- Authorizes AD Unit Fund All Required TDYs for Treatment and Follow-ups
- Comply With Operational Restrictions Following PRK



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Aviation/Special Duty Responsibilities

- **Squadron Flight Surgeon:**

- Provide Squadron Educational Briefings on Corneal Refractive Surgery and Policy
 - Know Program Details
 - Utilize AFMOA Web Page
- Timely Coordination of Initial Clinical Screening, Application Results, and Referral (With Local Eyecare Professional)
- Manage and Maintain Tracking Procedures for PRK, DNIF Actions, and Compliance With Planned Follow-ups
- Submit All Required Waiver And Follow-up Evaluation Documentation To Appropriate Agencies In Timely Fashion
 - Enter Aeromedical Summary Into AIMWTS
- Follow And Coordinate RTF Decision Requirements/Actions With MAJCOM Or Designated Local Waiver Authority
- Confirm Attending Local Military Eyecare Professional Has Completed *Refractive Surgery For The Warfighter* Training Course



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Aviation/Special Duty Responsibilities

- **Local Optometrist / Ophthalmologist :**
 - Timely Coordination Of Initial Screening, Application Results, Referral, And F/U With Local FSO
 - Perform All Local Post-op PRK Follow-up Evaluations
 - ACS Approved Forms
 - Determine If Clinical Waiver Criteria Are Satisfied
 - Complete The Approved *"Refractive Surgery For The Warfighter"* Training Course For Military Eyecare Professionals
 - Perform Or Obtain Corneal Topography



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Aviation/Special Duty Responsibilities

- **MAJCOM**

- AETC: Certification And Waiver Authority For All Flying Training And Special Duty Applicants
- MAJCOMs: Certification and Waiver Authority for Owned Assets
- Ensure All Required Documentation (All Waiver And Follow-up Evaluations) Are Forwarded To The *PRK Registry*
- If Designated, Ensure Their Local Waiver Authorities Comply With All Aspects Of Aviation PRK Program
- Ensure Their Local Military Eye Care Providers Complete The Approved *Refractive Surgery For The Warfighter* Training Course For Eye Care Professionals
- Ensure Waiver Action Is Entered Into Either:
 - AEROMEDICAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND WAIVER TRACKING SYSTEM (AIMWITS)
 - Waiver Tracking Database (Aircrew Waiver File)



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Aviation/Special Duty Responsibilities

- **ACS/WHMC:** *USAF Aviation And Special Duty PRK Program*
 - Develop, Review, and Monitor Quality Control of All Documentation - **ACS/WHMC**
 - Apportion Pilot PRK Slots by Rated Years of Service (RYOS) - **ACS**
 - Notify FSO of Status of Application - **ACS**
 - Conduct Final Pre-op Clinical Evaluation - **WHMC/ACS/WF Centers**
 - Complete Informed Consent Document - **WHMC/WF Centers**
 - Provide Treatment and Follow-up - **WHMC/WF Centers**
 - Conduct Aeromedical Vision Testing: Pre- and Post-op - **ACS/WHMC/WF Centers**
 - Monitor Clinical Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria With AFMOA - **ACS/WHMC**
 - Monitor Local Referral Screening Requirements With AFMOA - **ACS/WHMC**
 - Educate A/SD Personnel in Corneal Refractive Surgery - **ACS/WHMC**
 - Present the *PRK for the Warfighter* Training Course - **ACS/WHMC**
 - Establish and Maintain the USAF Aviation and Special Duty PRK Registry - **ACS**
 - AFMOA Status Reports: USAF Aviation and Special Duty PRK Program - **ACS**

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Aviation/Special Duty Responsibilities

- **AFMOA**

- Develop PRK Waiver Policy
- Provide PRK Policy Update As Needed
- Provide Quarterly Updates To HQ USAF / SG And HQ USAF / CC
 - USAF Aviation And Special Duty Personnel PRK Program
 - Warfighter Corneal Refractive Surgery Program
 - The USAF PRK Study



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Policy Updates and References

- **Links to official PRK policy updates can be found at the AFMOA website under “Links/Policy”**
 - <https://www.afms.mil/aeromed/>
- **Link to the USAF Aviation & Special Duty Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK) Waiver & Surveillance Program**
 - https://www.afms.mil/aeromed/USAF_PRK.cfm/
 - http://wwwsam.brooks.af.mil/web/consult_service/opto_sect/prk.htm
- **Link to the “Warfighter Corneal Refractive Surgery” webpage**
 - <https://www.afms.mil/warfightereyes/>



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Thank You !



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